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# ISLAND TIMES



DECEMBER/JANUARY 2008

A community newspaper covering the islands of Casco Bay

FREE

## Gem Gallery helps Peaks arts community thrive

New array of holiday offerings now on sale is just the latest showcase of extraordinary local talent.

BY DAVID COHAN

When the Gem Gallery opened in the summer of 2003 there seemed to be huge pent up energy from island artists and demand from the general community for a venue that could offer both an aesthetic and commercial focus for locally produced art.

It was the stuff of dreams, more literally than figuratively though. The space at 62 Island Avenue that is now the Gem Gallery used to be Kristen Chalmers' bedroom. She's lived in her house since the early 1990s and rented out a portion of the space that fronts on Island Av-

enue to the Umbrella Cover Museum for many years. But the idea of the Gem Gallery is something that Kristen dreamed up and with the help of her contractor brother Rick reconfigured her house so that she could move all of her living space to the other side to make room for the new gallery.

Her dark, dated bedroom was transformed into a bright, modern Manhattan-like gallery space with white-washed walls, big windows, a new welcoming door opening onto Island Avenue, and some very cool design elements, such as the floating corrugated aluminum ceiling and gooseneck track lighting fixtures.

Stop in on a Thursday evening during the summer when a new gallery exhibition is having its opening and you'll find year-rounders and summer residents

*please see THE GEM, page 6*



The newly elected seven-member Peaks Island Council gets sworn in.

Photo by Chris Hoppin

## The new Peaks Island Council begins its work

Following the defeat in the Maine Legislature's State and Local Government Committee of a bill that would have permitted Peaks Island to separate from the City of Portland and form its own town, the City established the framework for a seven-member Peaks Island Council to be formally elected by the registered voters on Peaks Island and to thereafter serve as the Island's representative body. The City ordinance establishing the Council authorized it to "exercise all powers and fulfill all functions on Peaks Island including but not

limited to....," a broad mandate indeed.

Following an election campaign reported previously in the *Island Times*, on November 6, 2007, Peaks Island voters, in a relatively high turnout, selected the following Islanders to constitute the first Peaks Island Council: Thomas (Tom) Bohan, Robert (Bob) Hurley, Kathryn Moxhay, Lynne Richard, Michael (Mike) Langella, Elizabeth (Betsy) Stout, and Robert (Rob) Tiffany. In accord with the ordinance, the top three vote-getters, Bob Hurley, Lynne Richard, and Mike Langella

received three-year terms, the next two, Tom Bohan and Betsy Stout, two-year terms, and the next two, Kathryn Moxhay and Rob Tiffany, one-year terms. In this way, future elections will be for only two or three seats instead of for all seven, as was the case this year.

As of December 7, 2007, the Council has had its first regular Meeting, plus one special Meeting, and three Workshops. These events are described in the article below, which also sets out the anticipated schedule for future Meetings and Workshops.



Islanders on Peaks recently gathered for a pre-tree lighting ceremony sing along with Santa. For more photos of the holiday festivities on Peaks, please see page 2. *Photo by Diana Moxhay*

## New group of knitters offers comfort with prayer shawls

BY REBECCA STEPHANS

It is Thursday afternoon and I am sitting with a circle of women who are all knitting or crocheting colorful bulky yarn into shawls of various patterns and sizes. On this particular day we are at the parsonage of Brackett Memorial Church; I am sitting cross-legged in a large, comfy chair and my lap is full of dogs - a chihuahua and a dachshund napping contentedly on each leg - as I knit a thick, buttery yellow yarn into a prayer shawl. I am joyfully warm and happy sitting in this circle of women with the dogs in my lap, and I hold the intention of infusing the shawl with all of the love and kindness I feel in this room.

When the shawl is completed, it will be given to someone in the community who is in need of comfort. I do not yet know who will receive the shawl, and the recipient may never know who knitted it. Welcome to the Peaks Island Prayer Shawl Ministry, a group of needle workers who are spreading warmth, comfort and prayers

for peace and healing throughout the island community. At present, we have twelve members. Some of us are members of the church and some are not. Some of us are experienced knitters and some are just learning. We all share the joy of gathering in service.

Prayer Shawl Ministry was conceived in 1998 by Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo, two graduates of the 1997 Women's Leadership Institute at The Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. They wanted to combine their love of knitting and crocheting with spiritual practice and mission work. Shawl makers begin with prayers and blessings and carry meditative intention throughout the creation of the shawl. When the shawls are complete, the minister offers another blessing before it is given to a community member in need of comfort, solace or healing. Sometimes shawls are also given in times of celebration and joy.

In one of those serendipitous connections that are so frequent

*please see SHAWLS, page 7*

Since last month, the new Peaks Island Council has been elected, launched, and given the task of figuring out how it is going to operate and interact with the rest of the Island. As a consequence, the seven Islanders elected to the first Council have been busy and for the most part have had the experience of trying to shape a new type of organization while carrying on their deliberations in public. Between Nov. 13 and Dec. 5, the Council held its first regular Meeting, the occasion of its inauguration, one Special Meeting, and three Workshops. In addition, several two-person subcommittees have been at work preparing recommendations for the Council as a whole. Below are set out some of the details of these events.

Nov. 13, 2007: Before a capacity crowd at the Peaks Island School, the first Peaks Island Council was sworn in

at 7:07 p.m. this evening by Assistant Portland City Manager Patricia Finnegan. Asst. Mgr. Finnegan had been specialized deputized to perform this function by Portland City Clerk Linda Cohen, who was unable to attend because of a prior out-of-state commitment.

The ceremony consisted of the seven councilors standing behind a table bearing anonymously provided name plaques, raising their right hands, and promising separately and in unison to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Maine to the best of their respective abilities. At the conclusion of the swearing-in, there was enthusiastic applause from the audience. It is rumored that somewhere on YouTube® there is a videotape available of this event.

Witnessing the inauguration, in addition to the crowd of Islanders, were Kevin Donoghue, Peaks' City Council rep-

resentative, Portland Mayor Nicholas Mavodones, and Portland Corporation Attorney Gary Wood, who formally congratulated the new Councilors on their election, and welcomed them into Portland's political fold. Following that, Attorney Wood outlined some basic requirements for Council procedures, while emphasizing that "procedure mustn't thwart the will of the majority," and recommending that the new Council avoid adopting the cumbersome procedures used by the City of Portland. He stated that the Peaks Island Council's primary duty is to seek community involve-

*please see COUNCIL, page 9*

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## Lines from the Casco Bay Lines

BY CHRIS HOPPIN

As Catherine Debo completes her first year as General Manager of the Casco Bay Island Transit District, she continually mentions her pride in the Casco Bay Lines' service provided by the District's team. Here's an update on that service.

The first meeting of the new board of directors on November 16<sup>th</sup> elected new officers for 2007-2008. Jim Phipps of Chebeague continues as President while Rick Franz of Great Diamond Island and Patrick Flynn of Peaks continue as vice presidents. Bill Overlock of Long Island is the new treasurer. Donna Rockett of Long Island and Chris Hoppin of Peaks are "at large" members and the newly-elected clerk and assistant clerk respectively. The other new board members are Frank Peretti from Peaks and Dave Crowley from Cliff. Retiring directors Leo Carter, Chuck Radis and Gene Taylor were thanked for their service.

The 2007 Islander Questionnaire survey, available on the Bay Lines' website, [www.CascoBayLines.com](http://www.CascoBayLines.com), noted a wide range of suggestions to balance overall satisfaction with the company. As a quasi-municipal utility, the Bay Lines receive support from the City of Portland, State of Maine and the Federal Government, but most revenues are derived from ticket sales and freight.

The Board heard reports from the Operations Committee, which had earlier increased service with a new 8:30 PM ferry to Long and the Diamond Islands at their October meeting. They also switched passenger service for car ferry service to Peaks on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays on the Winter B Sailing Schedule. The new services are expected to pay for themselves and break even. Also, there is an opportunity for additional revenue, depending upon traffic volume.

The Board adopted a revised alcohol policy for charter services, a formal weapons security policy, and policies concerning fa-

cilities use and solicitations on the premises at the November Board meeting.

Other discussions included meetings with City officials about extending the lease on the Ferry Terminal that is owned by the City of Portland as well as expanding space on the dock to accommodate a replacement ferry for the Island Romance in 2011. U.S. Coast Guard regulations require a larger ferry to accommodate passenger capacities.

The Operations Committee has recommended a new summer ferry scheduled departure from Peaks on Sundays at 6:20 PM to help reduce crowds and provide a more "family friendly" atmosphere at that time. It also recommends a policy prohibiting open alcohol consumption on Sunday afternoon ferries in the summer season. These recommendations, part of a comprehensive list of actions to address problems on summer Sundays, will be on the agenda at the December 21<sup>st</sup> Board of Directors' meeting.

Among other committees are a new Marketing Committee which includes a team of community volunteers looking for new sources of revenue to offset costs and assist ticket prices. They report progress with counter sales of souvenirs and other items and an on-line store up and running at [www.CascoBayLines.com](http://www.CascoBayLines.com). The committee is also promoting the District's group sales catering business using the Bay Mist, a profitable extension of regular services.

Several board members also suggested exploring mainland parking issues. Although the Bay Lines do not own the attached parking garage, its customers are concerned about the lack of adequate parking and rising parking costs in the Old Port area.

Chris Hoppin was recently elected to serve on the board of directors for the Casco Bay Lines Transit District. He lives on Peaks Island.

## The Ball at Jones Landing was a ball!

BY RHONDA BERG

One hundred fifty or so island women were in attendance for the Ladies-only Ball Gown Party held once again at Peaks Island's Jones Landing, on Nov. 17. The event

on her desire to wear ball gowns and be surrounded by women doing the same, invited a clutch of friends to her home--ball gown attire required. This was repeated in 2003 and 2004 and then, in 2005, as Sandy



About 150 women attended the recent ball at Jones Landing, helping raise money for cancer research.

Photo by Rhonda Berg

raised a total of \$1,365 for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and donations have continued to come in.

The event, now looking to be an annual one, can be traced to 2002, when longtime island resident Sandy Radis, acting

dy turned 50, she and other half-centenarian women rented the Landing and invited ball-gown-clad friends to come help them celebrate their birthdays. At that point, Robin Clark volunteered the venue for 2006 and future yearly ball gown parties, setting a charge of \$5 at the door for each attendee. Sandy, along with Rose Ann Walsh and Deb Kendall, comprising the planning committee for 2006 and 2007, were pleasantly surprised in 2006 when Robin donated the proceeds to charity rather than toward her overhead. She did the same thing this year. A life size color cutout of Fabio, always present at this event, is also donated by Robin along with the bartender services and countless other things, including food, with additional food brought by attendees to share.

This year, Robin's daughter, Alexandra, got in on the act by supplying five CDs of great music that neither let up nor repeated itself the entire evening, as dancing women from 20 to 80 traipsed the floor. Adding to the atmosphere of the evening were corsages offered and supplied by Jim Lausier, the quantity based on requests from attendees and various secret admirers of some of the ladies. They were prepared by Jim, joined by Patty Zimmer-

please see BALL, page 10

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## For the love of Peaks!

BY FRAN HOUSTON

Join me in my newest adventure! Last year it was traveling to Hawaii. This year it is staying on Peaks Island, gathering life stories through writing and photography. The results will be shown as an exhibit at the Gem Gallery in June of 2008, the month we celebrate Peaks Island. My hope is to capture the heart, history, and humor of the older (and wiser) Peaks Islanders. I invite those who can, to write their own story; for those who prefer to tell their story, we can interview, record, and transcribe; for those who have passed, we can recreate their narratives by collecting memories from the community. Each story will be accompanied by either a new photograph or a previously taken portrait, in an 8 1/2" x 11" format.

Put all this together, and viola, a tapestry of our island gems, faces and stories, reminding us of who we are and why we're here. Peaks Island is changing so fast, but it has changed before, and will again. Despite change, the heart of Peaks, the magic of it, remains true, and that, my friends, is what we know. If you are interested in seeing this project culminate in a book let me know. If there is enough interest, I can plan ahead accordingly. Thanks and please, come be a part of this journey. It'll be fun. Fran Houston, 290 Island Avenue, 766.2286, fran\_houston@hotmail.com.



Fran Houston



## Happy Holidays!

Pictures above were taken at the Peaks Island Craft Fair at The Inn by Rhonda Berg. Below, Santa and his helper and tree-lighting ceremony photos were taken by Diana Moxhay.





# Island Views



Kevin Donoghue

## My first year for the First District

BY CITY COUNCILOR KEVIN DONOGHUE

### Old Beginnings

I wrote my first monthly column of my three-year term as District One City Councilor back in January, which was ambitiously titled "Plans for Action in 2007." I wrote with equal ambition of what I hoped to accomplish in my assigned committees of Transportation, Housing, and Community Development. Much thanks and praise is owed for our successes even as I have failed to accomplish all before 2008.

First, I would like to thank former-Councilor Jim Cloutier, with whom I served on all three committees, for his nine years of public service in elected office. I trust Jim will continue to stay close to City Hall. I would also like to thank neighborhood leaders from Downtown, the East End, and Casco Bay Islands. I am intended to fully hear these neighborhoods rather than pretend to be the lone voice of District One.

### Transportation

District One rarely speaks with just one voice, but it nearly did so opposing the Peninsula Traffic Study. I worked to halt the plan to widen Franklin Street Arterial and table it to the Transportation Committee. In the meantime, the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization, the Bayside Neighborhood Association, Portland Trails, Greater Portland Landmarks and I founded the Franklin Reclamation Authority (FRA).

The FRA, named as an ironic ode to urban renewal, hosted a public meeting at Franklin Tower in May, which resulted in problem statements and vision statements which stood in median through Labor Day. Our case for a transformative planning process was so compelling that the city will be seeking Federal funding to continue our work with professional support. What is your vision for a Franklin Boulevard?

The Transportation Committee made strides on its own, not least by approving several new bike lanes on major roads recommended to us by the Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee to the City Council. Another success for bicyclists and pedestrians was the creation of streamlined administrative authority to remove on-street parking spaces that create user conflicts or impede site distances near intersections.

What excites me most is that, after some delay, we are finally ready to start the Peninsula Transit Study, a response to the failures of the Peninsula Traffic Study. We have retained planners of Nelson/Nygaard to help us limit single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs)

and promote Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). I will chair the study committee and have appointed Bill Hall of Peaks Island to represent District One.

### Housing

Once it became clear that the former Adams School would be turned over by the School Department, former Councilor Will Gorham appointed its planning group; the Adams School Re-Use Committee. After hosting a public forum on its redevelopment with the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization, the appointed committee and I asked the Muskie School to help us with a "Community Design Day."

The Community Design Day attracted dozens of area residents to describe and draw their own vision for the redevelopment of the school. The Adams School Re-Use Committee recommendation reflected public desire for community space and affordable ownership opportunities for families on Munjoy Hill. The Housing Committee is likely to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for developers this December.

While we faced significant challenges from staff turnover and staff shortages in the Planning Division, we were able to mitigate some significant losses. The former YWCA was demolished and precipitated an emergency shelter at Preble Street due to the loss of dozens of single-room-occupancy units (SROs). We responded by issuance of an RFP for developers to use nearly \$400,000 for creation of new SROs.

An early success of the legislative year was passage of our first ordinance for inclusionary zoning (IZ). IZ offers land use incentives to developers who include permanently-affordable units in new buildings in residential and business zones on the peninsula. I hope that we extend these principle to the islands, especially as we recently granted a vacant lot to HOMESTART for affordable housing on Peaks Island.

### Community Development

I regret that the Community Development Committee (CDC) managed to accomplish nothing in 2007. We began by failing to negotiate amendments to the now-repealed Formula Business Ordinance (FBO) and spent the rest of the year in disagreement over land deals in Bayside and on the Eastern Waterfront. Each instance illustrates the inherent folly of decision-making without meaningful citizen involvement.

In Bayside, after having retained a commercial brokerage to expedite development of city-controlled rail yard parcels below

## Letters to the Editor

### A note of thanks

When I read about David's departure from the Island Times, I had to write to thank you, admittedly belatedly, for all you both have done to bring environmental issues before your readers. Casco Baykeeper Joe Payne and the rest of the staff and volunteers here at Friends of Casco Bay know that you and your readers care as passionately about the health of Casco Bay as we do. You were one of the first newspapers to devote front page coverage to issues such as cruise ship pollution and sewage disposal.

We know that commitment will continue. Please count on us to support you in any way we can, Mary Lou, as you assume the helm alone.

Best of luck to both of you in your new adventures.

For all of us here at FOCB, we wish you the best,

Mary M. Cerullo, Associate Director  
Friends of Casco Bay

## Island Times takes on new format

Now that co-publisher David Tyler has stepped down to pursue a career as a full-time stay-at-home dad, nearly 20 volunteers from Peaks Island have stepped forward to fill the void. Beginning this month, you will see the names of many of these talented writers and photographers. Thanks to all of them, and to the continued support from a solid core of advertisers, the *Island Times* will continue publication.

Please let us know what you think of the new format by emailing us at [itimes@maine.rr.com](mailto:itimes@maine.rr.com). Also let us know if you have ideas for issues you would like to see covered in the coming months. Ideas for new regular features will also be happily accepted.

Other contributors will be leaving in coming months as new ones join us. This month, we

say good-bye to Cevia Rosol as our local crossword puzzle master. Thanks so much for your dedication and the more than five years of puzzles! You will be missed. Leo Carter, who writes the column on Cliff Island, will also be leaving after this issue. We thank him as well and his contribution has also been greatly appreciated.

This leaves us with a need for writers to cover the other Casco Bay Islands of Cliff and Long. We also need another puzzle master. Anyone interested in submitting a new puzzle of any type, please contact us. And anyone with an interest in regularly covering these other important islands, please contact us as well.

Thanks so much to all and have a great holiday season!

-Mary Lou Wendell, publisher

Somerset Street, still no deal has been made nor has any ground been broken. Neighbors remain unenthusiastic about an official vision for an urban office park and parking garage while taxpayers are asked to trust a private process defined by negotiations excluding elected officials.

On the Eastern Waterfront, it had been the questionable integrity of the public process that challenged the public trust and stalled progress on planning for the Maine State Pier and Portland Ocean Terminal. I sought to account for the lack of citizen involvement by hosting a public forum on the pier in August, yet meaningful opportunities for public input promise to lie ahead as we work with a new City Council.

My greatest hope for the year had been that we would finally begin to practice neighborhood planning, as promised in the Neighborhood Foundation Plan from 2001. Instead of waiting for official support, neighborhoods can take the initiative on citizen-led planning and be sure to be followed by City Hall. Peaks Island is perhaps best positioned to restart its planning process with the Peaks Island Council.

### New Beginnings

2008 promises great opportunity for transportation choice, affordable housing, and citizen involvement. I expect much from

both the Peninsula Transit Study and more robust policies for Inclusionary Zoning. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) reform has already begun with neighborhood meetings to solicit citizen project requests for income-eligible districts of Downtown, East End, and Cliff Island.

The new year also inaugurates a new City Council. City Councilor John Anton replaces Jim Cloutier and City Councilor Dan Skolnik replaces Donna Carr in representing neighborhoods of District Three. I welcome Councilors Anton and Skolnik and wish both of them successful terms on the City Council. I hope to have served you well this first year in office and hope to serve you better still this next year.

Please tell me your thoughts on the past year and hopes for the next: [kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov)

Kevin Donoghue represents the island neighborhoods of Portland as the District One City Councilor. He works at Mitchell Geographics, Inc and lives on Munjoy Hill. File photo should have appeared in your issues of October or November 2006. Need a new 1!

Current committee assignments include: community development, housing, transportation, METRO Board, CBTD Board, Peaks Island Council.

## ISLAND TIMES

A community newspaper covering Peaks Island

Publishers: Mary Lou Wendell

Member of the New England Press Association.

The *Island Times* is a community newspaper covering the islands in Casco Bay. We welcome birth, engagement and wedding announcements; obituaries; notices of community events; and letters to the editor. Please try to keep letters to 300 words or less. We reserve the right to edit all letters. The newspaper is available by mail for \$20 a year. Address checks to *Island Times*. Our mailing address is 146 Ledgewood Rd., Peaks Island, Maine, 04108. To reach Mary Lou Wendell, call 272-0666. Our e-mail address is [itimes@maine.rr.com](mailto:itimes@maine.rr.com). For ad rates, call 272-0666.

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# This island life

BY GEORGE ROSOL

Long experience has taught us that it is best to ease into cold weather. The winter catalogs began coming in summer. I saw some islanders wearing vests over their short sleeve shirts in November. And there were folks with one earmuff and a single glove directed toward the windward side of the island. This could lead to a revolutionary line of between-season wear. Jeans with one lined leg. Half-body long johns; call them semi-jays for short. And for half the money.

Do Mainers really look and dress as seen in the El El catalogs? Are we king and queen of the prom romping in the snow in high-tech shoes and space-age snowshoes with our otherworldly beautiful kids tagging behind? Are our yellow labs and puppies picture perfect splashing about the surf and sandy beaches of grand cottages? And who sez it's okay to name shirts and coats and other stuff after our towns and mountains and rivers and bays and islands? Can we extract a royalty on the use of our names and maybe get a little tax relief? Those catalogs number in the millions and they're everywhere. It is said that a long-expired spring sale issue was left in the module abandoned on the moon. Copies are likely to be found in the book racks of nuclear submarines and in the seats of Shanghai rickshaws.

The real side of all this is that it paints a picture far different than the one I see as I walk the wintry streets of Peaks Island. I see folks that are beautiful in an island way. Coats leaking goose down and thinsulate, complexions worn craggy by the wind and whatever happens

to be falling out of the sky. Bare-legged kids tattooed with summer bruises, running aimlessly in search of mischief. Our dogs, compared with media mutts, are shaggy, mostly friendly brutes that roam when and where they please. It's sad that a mountain of catalogs is what paints a sugar-coated picture of our state. It's rugged and beautiful, yes, but it takes a special kind of plain and uncomplicated folk to live every good and bad minute in it.



I thought I had my own Star of the East this holiday season. The difference was that it was seen shining to the south. And it didn't change its position throughout the night. Just seconds before I was to place calls to the Miracles Department of the Vatican and to astronomer Mike Richards, it occurred to me that I could see this star through only one window, a sloping bedroom skylight. Then my analytical skills saved the day. While I stumbled about in the dark, the star sped across the sky and disappeared. I had kicked my laptop's transformer, with its bright little star-colored on-light, to a place where it would not reflect from the glass pane.

This is the story as told to me. "This is the story as told to me. 'Once, a long time ago, Peaks Island was a place of pastures, sheep, orchards, farmsteads, and large families. Mathew and Hilda were a farm couple way out on a limb of the Trott family tree. They were nearing 30 years of age and were childless. With old age creeping up and no heirs to take over the land, Mathew and Hilda called on Doc

Pritchard (I think that was his name) for help.

Now Doc was self-taught. He learned to set broken bones of animals and to deliver calves and ewes, and he figured that bones are bones and kids are kids be they of man or beast. And he had a way with making medicines, about 90 proof, that satisfied the needs of both. Mathew and Hilda asked if Doc could mix a fertility potion. Well, to make a short story longer, he did just that, although most folks believed Mathew had more to do with Hilda's pregnancy than Pritchard, "MD."

With his store-bought stethoscope, Doc examined Hilda and told her that he heard not one heartbeat, or two heartbeats, but three. Triplets! he announced to one and all. Mother-to-be Hilda, not short on enthusiasm, predicted boys, prepared a room in the farmhouse for them and, fine Christian woman that she was, named them Mark, Luke, and John. Her home was now to be populated by all four Evangelists. Hilda grew, the babies grew and, in her mind, they were as good as weaned, grown, and behind the plow.

Hilda got her boys, as ordered, on the day before Christmas. With one hitch. They were identical twins—not triplets. She was beside herself. And there was nothing worse than having two Hildas hip to hip. Doc Pritchard felt her wrath. He had as much as killed one of her boys. Well, she wouldn't settle for that. Hilda treated the two brothers as triplets. She saw each boy as one of three. She would call them by whatever name came to mind. Island folks can get used to almost anything, given enough time. Besides, in many large families, it's easy to lose count. So the twins were triplets and that was that. The Methodists and Catholics and Episcopalians had no problem since their Trinity

is three in one. The boys were a natural to play the Three Kings in the holiday pageant. The third king, it was explained, was delayed because his camel threw a shoe on a rough stretch outside Damascus.

And life went on at the farm. The two boys did the work of three, ate for three, and made as much mischief as three.

As a longtime friend of Mark (or John) and Luke (or John) and John (aka, Mark or Luke), I attended their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration some Christmases ago. For dinner, there was the usual soft-fried chicken and the hard-fried chicken and steak-fried chicken and wild turkey and every other imaginable side dish. The brothers sat on one side, separated by the setting for Mark, Luke, or John. Across the table were spaces for long-departed Mathew and Hilda. We talked with invited guests and the boys and with the empty chairs.

The table was cleared after dinner and a large sheet cake with many lit candles appeared. The twins stood, took a deep breath and blew out roughly two-thirds of the flames. Then, to our great astonishment, a rogue gust of air from some unknown region swept across the table, engulfed the cake, and snuffed out the remaining lit candles.

Like that rare clap of Maine thunder, a cheer went up and all raised a glass to the phantom triplet of Peaks Island, Maine."



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# Cliff Island News

BY LEO CARTER

Another snow season approaches, and Cliff Islanders await the joys of the coming holidays as well as the changes planned for our wharf and woodlands. Some have gathered to discuss ways of sustaining the year round character of the island. Children and adults are still recalling the events of the most recent scary evening.

## Halloween

The last day of October Alice and I were just finishing supper when we were overwhelmed, and our personas were taken over by two monsters, who had been gaining strength in a dark forgotten corner of an upstairs closet since last year at this time. I struggled to resist becoming Ghoulo, but I knew it was hopeless when I noticed my Ghoulfriend, Ghoularina going to answer the door. The front steps were crowded with small people looking like bats, princesses and many other scary and funny creations. Ghoulo could not help growling when someone suggested that he was really Leo. He assured the little goblins that he had eaten Leo for supper, and was looking for dessert. There were protests from the refreshingly innocent and yet skeptical group. Soon a new voice was emerging from Ghoularina's face. She had given the treats, and was on her knees speaking in her kind, gentle, first-grade-teacher voice. She quickly rose, and

peeled back my face. Big smiles of relief ran across the faces of the littlest goblins. The monsters had lost their powers for another year, but they might be hiding in some dark place while building up their strength for another scary future.

## Logging begins

Starting in late November the city of Portland and FEMA are beginning a project to remove significant quantities of spruce and other trees from Cliff Island. This effort is being made in response to the need to reduce the fire hazard associated with the catastrophic Patriot's Day storm which felled hundreds of trees on this half square mile island. According to Portland's island liaison, Mike Murray, there will be enough crewmen working in the woods to justify the renting of two houses on the island. This will avoid the expenses and delays associated with daily transit of workers between the mainland and the island. Murray expects that the crew size, the heavy equipment as well as the arrangements made with the barge service company (Lionel Plante) will ensure the completion of the project before mud season hits next year. The new barge landing will get a workout from the very heavy traffic associated with this work, and we hope that the saving of barge time and the increased access time will pay off.

Will the new landing pass this test?

## New Wharf shed

Last summer a petition signed by one hundred Cliff Islanders was presented to Portland Officials attending their annual island visit at the community hall. The people had requested that the shed, which provides

shelter for people and freight awaiting the ferry, be repaired, and that the filth associated with roosting birds (pigeons and swallows) be eliminated. After the meeting the officials viewed the structure and readily agreed to the need. The petition suggested a deadline of October for at least a temporary repair and cleanup. The good news in mid November is that a plan for a permanent replacement has been agreed to by all parties, and that the project promises to get a good result at a low cost. The bad news is that the bypassing of the immediate temporary repair means more time before the situation gets corrected. The materials have not been ordered yet, the cold rain and bitter winds are not yet excluded and the birds have made it pretty disgusting. Oh well, the fresh air outside is probably good for us!

## Cliff Island research committee

The ad hoc group calling themselves the Cliff Island Research Committee CIRC made an effort over the past few years to assess the pros and cons of possible secession from Portland, and to appraise the potential viability of a Town of Cliff Island. The Island's geographic and cultural separation from Portland made the idea seem quite appealing to some residents, and a surprising percentage of the eligible voters indicated a willingness to serve in essential roles in the hypothetical town. The tax base appeared to be more than adequate to fund all of the foreseeable needs of the island. Even so, most of the population never really showed serious interest in the project, and quite a few were openly opposed or at least very skeptical. A few reasons for reluctance might include: satisfaction with current services,

the effort needed to accomplish the change, fear of change, fear of others, lack of faith in the democratic process and/or ignorance about town governments. As the island population evolves it is not clear whether this issue will ever arise again.

Many long time residents are concerned that the escalating prices of property and the associated tax and mortgage burdens are making it difficult for the traditional island occupations and a year round community to continue. The number of full time lobster catchers has plummeted to eight from about twenty in the past. One hears predictions of an island occupied primarily by summer residents. Three quarters of the houses are not occupied most of the time, and many of these are mainly used for short term rentals during the summer. Worries about sustaining the school and post office are always present. Island residents led by Roger Berle have been meeting with Island Institute fellow, Brooke Brewer, to try to understand these issues and to develop a strategy to help maintain the positive features of our Island life. Ms. Brewer is living on Peaks Island where her efforts include assisting in providing affordable housing. Clearly, there is much to be understood and even more to be done, but the rewards are vast.

## Farewell

This will be my final contribution to the Island Times for the foreseeable future. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to write about Cliff Island people and issues, and to work with David Tyler, whose editorial supervision has been encouraging and insightful.

## THE GEM, from page 1

mingling, sipping wine, nibbling cheese, oohing & ahing, and snatching up the masterful and quirky artwork. Little red dots quickly appear on all of the descriptive tags signaling that particular pieces have been sold. It's not unusual to show up the next day and find that most of the artwork has already been purchased by some very happy patrons.

Islanders have now come to know the Gem Gallery as a place where you can stop in and find paintings, pottery, photographs, jewelry, postcards, clothing, and all sorts of other interesting finds, particularly around the holidays. It seems to have filled the needs of local artists and art-lovers alike.

"The island just needed a place where we could display, appreciate and sell all sorts of art," says Chalmers. "There's so much talent on our island and we needed a venue to appreciate it, a place where the artists could come together, show their work, feel appreciated and supported, and offer their art for sale."

It took a lot of work to rebuild the space, get the artists organized into a commercial venture, and open the Gem Gallery, but the response and support from the very first day has been outstanding. Much of the early credit goes to Jane Newkirk who, along with Chalmers, was one of the original motive forces behind the launch and operation of the Gem. In just a few years, the gallery has become a shining example of the kind of positive things can happen in a supportive community like Peaks.

"Jane was a great early motivator," says Jamie Hogan, a Peaks Island graphic artist who

also does illustration and exhibits her work at The Gem. "Having the gallery now is a good thing for the island artist community as we get to know one another both artistically and professionally," she explains.

Her husband Marty Braun, an illustrator and a freelance graphic artist, agrees and adds that island artists who generally work in their own private studios can sometimes feel isolated. "I don't think people on the island generally know what Jamie and I do, for instance," he says. "The Gem is a venue that gives islanders a chance to see what different island artists do, see their art." This now also includes Jamie's and Marty's eleven year old daughter Daisy's artwork, too.

Diane Wiencke, an island abstract painter who works in wax and oil mixed media, sees the Gem Gallery as part of the evolution and maturation of the artist community on Peaks. "I love that the Gem is here," she says. "It's important as a community to share that common thread of creativity among the people who live here."

Wiencke, who also exhibits in places like the Whitney Artworks, Aucocisco and Hay Galleries in Portland, has been pleased to see her clientele grow through the visibility and local connection that the Gem affords her, particularly from summer sales. "I have half a dozen regulars who first saw my work at The Gem who now will call me to see if I have any new works available," she says.

This past year, many of the island artists reorganized themselves into a collective at The Gem, "a kind of artists' cooperative," Chalmers explains. "Local artists produce great work, we get to show it off, sell it, and support island talent. It helps encourage lo-

cal artists to produce even more and to grow and refine their talents. It seems to be how a thriving local island arts community might ultimately be sustained."

"We had high hopes that the gallery might succeed and, I guess even though we've had some challenges, by most measures it has," she adds.

Hogan states that it is pretty miraculous that the artists on Peaks have come together to form such a collective and she's grateful that the Gem is now a venue where many different local artists' works can be seen together. She also feels that the island artists are now getting broader support.

In the years since the newly installed door on Island Avenue was opened, the Gem has become an island focal point that is helping talented Peaks artists coalesce into a more visible, better supported and better appreciated community.



Gem Gallery with Holiday 2007 offerings.

Photo by David Cohan

"It's pretty amazing when you think that in just the past few years, hundreds of new admirers and buyers have walked through the Gem's door and been introduced to our local artists and their work," says Chalmers. "It's become a fun gathering spot Downfront on summer evenings during gallery show openings and I hope islanders will stop in during the holiday season to see some of this season's beautiful and fun work."

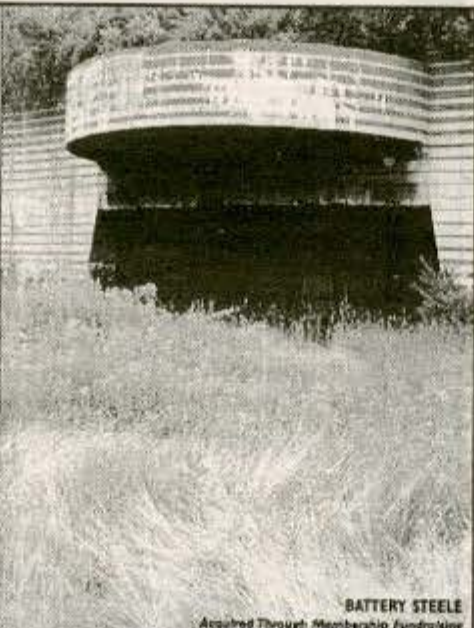
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SHAWL, from page 1

in Maine, I discovered that Desi Larson, the new minister at Brackett Church is an old friend of my friend and yoga colleague, Pam Jackson. When Pam came to the island to play piano duets with Desi, I joined them for lunch. Pam brought a copy of the magazine, "Response, the Voice of Women in Mission" that her mother had sent for Desi. One article featured Pam's mother, who is part of a Prayer Shawl Ministry in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I read the article and mentioned to Desi that I would be interested in starting a group here on Peaks. A few weeks later, I was knitting in Ann Hinderer's living room with a group of women who also resonate with this particular form of service.

The Peaks Island Prayer Shawl Ministry has been in existence for about one month now, and we have already produced 10 shawls and lap blankets. Six have been given to folks in the community and the other four recipients have been selected. I personally have delivered two shawls so far, along with a card and printed prayers, and find this to be a very moving way to visit someone who is in need of support. We have members who cannot meet with us on Thursdays, and we find other ways to include them in the camaraderie of our circle. Our current members reflected on why this ministry appeals to them so much and there was a thread of similarity in their responses: for the compa-

ny, volunteer work that fits into the rhythm of their days nicely, enjoying combining creativity and prayer, having received a shawl and wanting to give that comfort to others, meet new community members, tangible prayer in action, wanting to be part of the support system that jumps into action on this island when someone needs help.

We welcome anyone in the community who wants to join our group, and we are also receiving suggestions for recipients of shawls or lap blankets. If you like the idea of this ministry, but do not knit or crochet, we also are accepting funds to purchase yarn and other supplies. For more information, please contact Rebecca Stephans at 766-3017.



Above: some members of the Prayer Shawl Group. Left to right: Diane Clark, Margaret Bragdon, Rebecca Stephans, Ann Hinderer, Emily Sherwood (back) and Jo Taft. Below: Rebecca Stephans, a Prayer Shawl Group member, knitting.

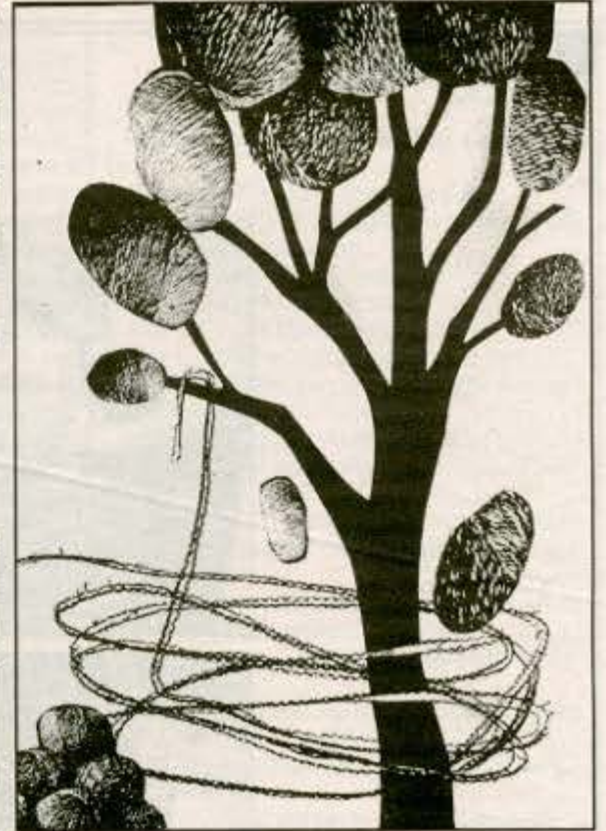


Illustration by Jamie Hogan from the book, Stephanie Pearl McPhee Casts Off, Storey Publishing.

## Chebeague Chronicles

BY DEB BOWMAN

How are your senses? Active? Functioning? Forgot you had them? One definition of the word senses is "to become aware of". I guess this means using any one of those further defined, "animal functions of hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste." Animal functions? Okay, I'll go with that. It would seem that on many occasions, the animal functions do kick in, overwhelming us with joy, awe, hunger, pain and fear. These emotions connect us to the world we live and make us feel a part of it.

You don't have to be an ardent out-doors-person to feel connected to the natural world around you. You do have to open yourself up to what is around you, to listen, look, smell, touch and sometimes taste things that come before you. Take a walk, be aware, breathe deeply, and be conscious of each and every step.

I hear crunching and scratching and look up to find a tiny red squirrel sizing me up from her perch high above my head. She is holding a pinecone and warily watches me approach. I acknowledge her and then look down see at the scattered remains that she has let fall down to the woody carpet. Her *briik briik* call lets me know I have invaded her space and off she goes back to her ever-green world.

Many Chebeaguers have been watching with interest the development of at least two wild turkey broods. A wild turkey can only be described as something mildly prehistoric. When one appears in the yard, it takes a second to register what you are looking at. It seems quite odd to have such a large bird slowly strutting around the truck and in and out of the saplings and brush. The strut is quite regal but one exercised with an edge of caution. The West End brood has eleven chicks that are now almost as large as their mother. I was quite concerned for a few days after finding several large feathers in the road, but counted eleven babies soon after and was filled with relief that the family was still intact. Mother sometimes will foolishly promenade her family down the road in between afternoon boats and on more than one occasion, I have gone out to shoo them all to the side before the traffic gets too close.

Now that we have snow on the ground, the mornings are sparkling and sounds are muffled. Winter brings a hush to everything, the tide laps more gently, and I strain to hear the ducks and birds. Water gurgles beneath skim ice, quietly as though it were thick as molasses. Stubborn leaves flutter at the end of bony branches, but do not fall. Scents are harder to pick up; the beach has no flavor wafting up the path. Hibernation starts to appeal to me.

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**COUNCIL**, from page 1

ment, to find out Island concerns, and to inform the City Council of these concerns.

The first order of business for the new Council was the selection of a presiding officer; this was accomplished through the unanimous election of Michael Langella as Council Chair. Chair Langella then called for recognition of the seven other Peaks Islanders who had run for the Council for their contributions thereby to the Island. Naming each in turn and requesting that they stand, he noted that the Council would be looking to them to help it fulfill its duties. Again, there was applause from the audience.

Other than the position of Chair, the Council deferred filling formal Council offices, including that of Recording Secretary, until a later time. Island Administrator Michael Murray served as secretary for the purposes of this first meeting.

Before undertaking any further business, Langella provided an opportunity for the public in attendance to speak, stating that the continuing practice would be to have a public comment session at the opening and closing of each Council Meeting (though not necessarily at the Workshops). Comments from the audience focused primarily on exhortations to get a solid system of public notification established. In indirect response, Langella stated that one of the Council's first goals is to build a Website for the Council. In a passing-of-the-torch gesture, Kay Taylor recounted how more than 20 years previously another group had established a body to represent the Island to the City, and that that body, the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association, had long been a voice of the community. She concluded by saying that she felt the new Council to be an improvement over the earlier efforts and wishing it success. Kay's remarks appeared to be very welcome to, and well received by, all on the Council. Mike Richards followed up by pointing out that the "gauge of success for the Council will be in how effective [it] is in getting the City Council to do what the Island wants."

The Council decided to schedule its regular monthly Meetings for the fourth Monday of each month, the comment being made that that would fit another Meeting in before the end of the current month, an important consideration in view of the work that had to be accomplished to adequately launch the Council. The monthly Meeting will be held in the Peaks Island School gymnasium, starting at 6:30 p.m., the early hour being necessitated by custodial schedules at the School. When attention was called to the fact that the fourth Monday of December is Christmas Eve this year, the December Meeting was moved to the third Monday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>.

Continuing with the concern regarding the amount of structural work needed to be done early on, the Council at first had proposed weekly meetings during the first three months. Then, realizing the burden that that would place on those City officials mandated to attend all Peaks Island Council meetings by the ordinance creating the Council, the Council decided instead to supplement the monthly Meeting with Workshops, a less formal gathering with no attendance requirements for City officials. The Workshops were scheduled to take place on the first three Wednesdays of each month at the Community Center, the School not being available on most Wednesdays. The Workshops will commence 7:00 p.m. The third Wednesday of November being the night before Thanksgiving this year, the Workshop for that week was set for the fourth Wednesday, the 28<sup>th</sup>.

As the inaugural meeting drew to a close at 8:30 p.m., Chair Langella asked the individual Council members to comment, eliciting the following:

Betsy Stout: "I thought it was real good first start, and I think it showed

that people are ready to move on and really work for the island."

Rob Tiffany: "I think this first meeting was very good, I think it was very Maine, ... very small town. Even though we're a part of Portland, we're a unique community, and we're working through these issues and we'll figure out what makes sense for the community of Peaks Island."

Kathryn Moxhay: "I thought was actually really exciting that we were all here, and that we are starting the process of putting this thing together. It's been exciting thinking about it, but very unclear how it's all going to be put together, and we need a lot of input about that, and thought processes to make sure we lay the ground work really carefully so that this is a productive council this year and for years to come."

Lynne Richard: "I was really nervous all day because I just kept thinking 'this is the first time we've had an elected body, elected in a formal election, on Peaks Island,' so suddenly the enormity of it hit me, and I was really nervous all day, but once we got here and got rolling and I looked out and saw it was my friends and neighbors, you know, sitting there, and I thought 'that's what I'm here for and they'll just get me through this', and that's what happened."

Tom Bohan: "What a great audience!"

Mike Langella: "I think it went very well. Everyone has acknowledged that this is new for all of us so we still have a lot to learn, and we'll become more polished as we get practice in our workshops and our meetings, but I think all of the people, the members of the Council felt that it was an historic event. It's the first time in Maine where a community council of this type has been elected by the people of a particular part of a city or a part of the state, so it is, for me, it is very, very exciting... There was no question that all of us have respect for one another and are going to work very, very hard to make whatever happens on the island ... meaningful ... for all the people that live out here, and we'll get there, one step at a time."

**November 14, 2007:** In setting the schedule for Workshops at their Inaugural Meeting, the Council initially did not realize that that schedule meant their having to gather two nights in a row their first week. When this was realized, they accepted the consequences and held the Workshop as scheduled, given that the next scheduled Workshop was not until November

28<sup>th</sup>, having been moved from Thanksgiving week. The result was that the first Workshop was held the night immediately following the first Meeting. Chair Langella had explained that at a Workshop session, matters can be discussed informally but that no decisions requiring a vote of the Council can be made. He also noted that in the normal course of events, there would be no public commentary, in contrast with the practice to be followed at the regular Meeting. As it turned out, there was public input at the first Workshop, in response to questions put the audience by individual Councilors.

With the words "so here we go, first workshop," Chair Mike Langella launched the Council into informal session, the primary tasks of which were to fill open positions, and to establish basic procedures for conducting business, notifying the public, and communicating with the City of Portland.

The Council concluded that because of the distraction of taking minutes, it would be important to have the Secretary position be filled by someone who is not a counselor. However, indications were that Council Treasurer was a position best held by a Councilor and indications were that Tom Bohan would be chosen when the Council was next in formal session. There was concern that the position of Secretary would be so demanding that some kind of stipend be paid. However, after it was realized that within the available budget it would not be possible to make the stipend commensurate with the task, it was decided to make the Secretary position fully volunteer. Next followed a somewhat vague and indecisive discussion of the position of Vice-Chair of the Council.

For now, the Council plans to use the Peaks Island bulletin boards for public notification purposes; however, there is also strong interest in using internet methods such as the Peaks Island information site ([peaksisland.info](http://peaksisland.info)). Beyond that, the Council is clearly determined to establish its own website.

The Council is struggling with the formation of a Study Commission that will help the Council decide how it should function as an elected body of the island community, and within the political structure of the City of Portland. Rob Tiffany offered Chebeague Island's system as a reference point in developing the Council's own structure, and the members agreed to study it. There was particular concern as to whether every single committee meeting had to be open to the public. In

*please see COUNCIL, page 10*

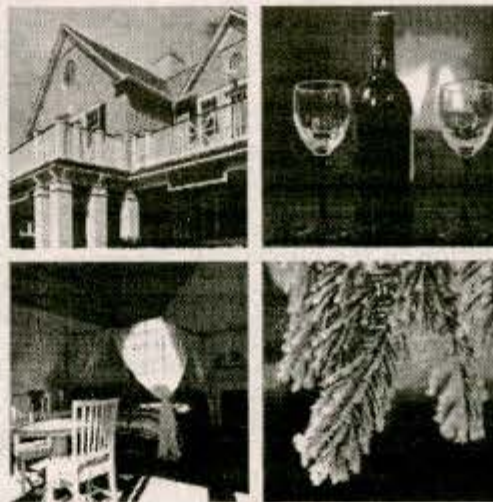
## Police log

### Peaks Island Police/EMS/Fire Combined Log

Nov. 1: 10:03 PM 911 Hang-up Calls  
Nov. 2: 5:20 PM Assault (no street listed [nsl]); 8:48 PM follow-up  
Nov. 3: 1:47 AM EMS, Luther St.  
Nov. 4: 9:43 PM EMS, (nsl)  
Nov. 5: 3:14 PM EMS, (nsl)  
Nov. 6: 9:37 PM Follow-up, Luther St  
Nov. 9: 4:26 PM Fire run, Seashore Ave, assisted by police  
Nov. 11: 8:02 PM Criminal Mischief (nsl)  
Nov. 13: 9:12 AM Service run (nsl) (EMS/Fire)  
Nov. 17: 1:28 AM Motor veh. acc. with possible injuries, arrest on outstanding warrant, Seashore Ave  
Nov. 17: 3:45 PM Criminal mischief, Luther St; 7:04 PM Fight, arrest, Island Ave  
Nov. 18: 4:06 AM Intoxicated person, Island Ave  
Nov. 19: 8:39 PM Assist sick person, Reed Ave  
Nov. 20: 2:45 PM Fire run, wires down, Island Ave  
Nov. 22: 12:47 AM Domestic dispute (nsl)  
Nov. 22: 2:22 PM Serving paperwork (nsl)  
Nov. 22: 7:36 PM EMS (nsl)  
Nov. 23: 6:38 AM Unattended death, Upper St  
Nov. 24: 8:27 AM EMS service run (nsl)  
Nov. 26: 1:02 PM Serving paperwork, Island Ave  
Nov. 26: 1:06 PM Serving paperwork, Knickerbocker Rd  
Nov. 26: 1:58 PM Serving paperwork, City Point Rd  
Nov. 29: 5:43 PM EMS, Seashore Ave  
Nov. 30: 6:12 PM Warrant arrest, Seashore Ave  
Nov. 30: 6:20 PM EMS/Fire assist police, Seashore Ave to landing

Happy  
Holidays!

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Illustration by Jamie Hogan

## Star Gazing

BY MIKE RICHARDS

Sunrise comes late this month, as Earth's north pole tips away from the sun and deprives us northerners of heat and light. But it gives us more of morning darkness and chances to look east and see our closest neighbor-planet Venus blazing in the first blush of dawn. Overhead is our next closest, ruddy Mars.

Venus is lower than last month but still brilliant as it shows us more of its cloud-topped surface even as it draws away from us on its inside track toward the far side of the sun. Before dawn, Sirius, our closest big star (next to the sun), is still up in the southeast. It's only 8.6 light years away and rides a diminutive companion star.

The sun peaks over the horizon around 7 now and only gets about 1/4 the way up in the sky, moving mostly sideways. Just think—the light you see was sent by the sun 8 minutes ago and is finally getting here. It's not immediate. Imagine going to Mars and back—light can't go that fast.

On the winter solstice week-end just before Christmas go out at noon, find your shadow, mark its end and pace it off. It's longer than you are by a lot because the sun's so low this time of year. We add our 44.5 degrees up from the equator and our 23.5 degree tilt, producing a 68 degrees out of a possible 90 degrees, and we're on the top of the world almost, so the sun's light and heat glance off us.

Sunset's around 4 so evening comes very early—but then the show begins, as overhead the beautiful blue-white star Vega is first to appear, spinning so fast it bulges in the middle and threatens to fly apart.

Next to it rests the Northern Cross, the asterism within the constellation Cygnus the Swan. As darkness deepens look northeast for yellow Capella, a multi-star system in Auriga the Charioteer. It includes two giants 10 times the sun's size and 80 times its luminosity, locked in a tight orbital embrace, closer than Venus to the Sun, and orbiting a common center in only 104 days.

Now look south and find the young star cluster Pleiades (PLEE-a-deez)—the Seven Sisters, the Littlest of Dippers. Below it is Aldebaran (all-DEB-o-ren) the red giant star that is the eye of Taurus the Bull and the tip of the V-shaped Hyades (HI-a-deez) asterism that forms his head.

Then Mars, the next planet out from the sun after Earth, rises up from the eastern ocean and glares its rusty reddest at us,

daring us to come. And come we will, in less than a generation, after our intrepid space-robots scout out the surface and our various orbiting satellites map every nook and cranny.

Mars' surface has in fact rusted though not from water as was first thought but rather from oxidation by ultraviolet radiation in almost pure carbon dioxide at sub-zero temperatures. Its atmosphere is far thinner than earth's rich air-blanket, and it can't diffuse the sun—except when monstrous dust storms rage across the rocky red desert. Mars is half the size of Earth and has far less mass, allowing its atmosphere to rise so high it's sheered off at the top by the solar wind, leaving a faint dust trail behind it.

Mars' two little moons are just captured asteroids and orbit perilously close to Mars' surface: Deimos is 3.5 miles wide and 14,000 miles high; Phobos is 6.6 miles wide and only 5,400 miles high—close enough to be slowed by Mars' upper atmosphere, promising a big red splash on the surface eons from now. We already get the occasional Mars meteorite raining down on Earth, so this could get messy.

Mars is going retro now, seeming to move backward compared to the stars that lie hundreds of light-years behind it, as Earth passes it on the inside. At mid-month Mars reaches opposition and its closest approach to Earth for years to come.

Mars is in the constellation Gemini the Twins: their heads are on the left, with Castor above Pollux. After they get up, look with binoculars for the double star-cluster at Pollux's foot.

In mid-December, the Gemini meteor shower peaks for us, emanating out of Castor's head, and the thin crescent moon will have long been set, so best naked-eye viewing is late at night or early Saturday morning, bundled up, back-shore.

Dec. 1: Last Quarter Moon is high at sunrise with Saturn sitting just above it. Sunrise is at 6:53 a.m. and sunset is at 4:06 p.m., both still headed in the wrong direction—unless you're an astronomer.

Dec. 4, 5, 6: A waning crescent moon hangs well to the right of Venus at dawn.

Dec. 8: Earliest-sunset at 4:04 p.m. tonight. Latest sunrise doesn't come until Jan. 5, because Earth's orbit is elliptical and its pole is tilted.

Dec. 9: New Moon means no moon to light the sky and ruin the contrast for hunt-

ers of fainter celestial prey, such as galaxies, nebulae and star clusters.

Dec. 13, 14, 15: Geminid meteor shower peaks and is best seen before dawn. Most meteors are dust particles left by comets, but Geminids come from an asteroid named Phaethon, probably the remains of an older comet.

Dec. 17: First Quarter Moon is high at sunset.

Dec. 18: Mars is its closest this time around, at 54.8 million miles. It was closer a few years ago but not as well positioned as it is now, high in the sky, with less atmosphere to blur the image.

Dec. 20: Saturn goes retrograde beginning today.

Dec. 21: A nearly full moon is next to the Pleiades star cluster.

Dec. 22: Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. For thousands of years, cultures around the world have created festivals of food and drink, song and dance, and fire and light to chase the winter blues away. Religious leaders saw the light and rearranged their holidays to coincide with the celebrations already in progress.

Dec. 23: Full "Cold" Moon sets at 7:06 a.m. and rises at 3:28 p.m. In winter it rises higher in the sky because the sun opposite it is lower, and it stays visible for longer than the sun does, in part because it's actually orbiting eastward, the same direction as the Earth turns. Tonight, Mars is just beneath the moon.

Dec. 24: Mars is at opposition to the sun, with Earth between them.

Dec. 25: Isaac Newton's birthday in 1642. He was pest at school, reading the entire textbooks before classes began and asking teachers hard questions. In his early 20s he experimented with light and gravity and provided the bases for much of modern physics. His later years were devoted largely to alchemy, trying to turn ordinary metals into gold.

Dec. 27: Johannes Kepler's birthday in 1571. He took Tycho Brahe's book of celestial observations and mathematically computed that planets' orbits are elliptical, not "perfectly" round, so their orbital speeds varied depending on where they were in the ellipse.

Dec. 31: Sunrise is at 7:14 a.m. and sunset is at 4:13 p.m., giving us 15 hours of darkness and only 9 hours of light. No wonder it's cold!

BALL, from page 2

man, and the \$450 raised from their efforts was added to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation donations. Jim also supplied, gratis, three decorative bouquets for the room.

When asked their thoughts on why the women would attend such an event in such great numbers, Radis, Walsh and Kendall had a variety of answers: It's an opportunity to get dressed-up with just other women...a chance to be outrageous while oth-

ers think of their proms of long-ago...care-free...an occasion to get together to primp and laugh. They also noted that some dine out first, making an entire evening of it. For others, it is simply an inexpensive, fun evening tied to a good cause. Radis said women come up to her all year to exclaim over the great dress they found at one thrift store or another, in anticipation of the next ball. Walsh collects gloves all year long for loaning out and all three collect feather boas and other important accoutrements

necessary for this dress-up affair. This year, Ron and Lisa Sinicki, owners of the Down Front candy/clothing/ice-cream establishment, allowed Radis, Walsh and Kendall to use their store's display windows to show off gowns and other finery available at the try-on event held one week before the party. That display is credited with the much broader and bigger turn-out this year compared to the previous one. Forty to fifty second-hand dresses and lots of accessories were loaned out from the San-

dy-Rose Ann-Deb collection, stashed in attics and the like during the rest of the year and gradually growing in size and extent as time goes on. As has the Ball Gown Event itself. The organizers expressed thanks to all those who attended this year and hopes that it will continue to be an annual fall/winter fun event for the Island women for the foreseeable future.

COUNCIL, from page 9

part to explore that question, Kathryn Moxhay, Tom Bohan and Mike Langella announced that a meeting with City officials had been scheduled for the following day in order to begin laying out the ground rules that the Council and the City of Portland will use in working with each other. Councilor Stout asked when and in what way that meeting with the City had been set up without any other Councilor knowing about it. Chair Langella responded that it had come about in the way it had because of time pressures and that any other Councilor who wished to attend would be welcome.

It was pointed out that, contrary to the terms of the City Ordinance creating the Council, there had been no representative present from the Portland School Board at the first Meeting. After some discussion, the sense of the Council seemed to be that such attendance was not in general necessary, and that the ordinance could be amended to recognize that fact.

In accord with the schedule of having the regular monthly Meeting on the fourth Monday of the month, the next Meeting of the Council was set for November 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Peaks Is-

land Elementary school, two days before the next Workshop, set for November 28<sup>th</sup> in the Community Center.

**November 26, 2007** The Council held its regular November Meeting at the School gymnasium, commencing at 6:30 p.m. and running until nearly 8:30 p.m. Present at the Meeting, in addition to the public and the seven Peaks Island Councilors, were Portland Councilor Kevin Donoghue and City Administrator Mike Murray. Early in the Meeting, Chair Langella reminded people of the Workshop scheduled for November 28 and the brief Special Meeting to be held at the close of that Workshop. Kevin Donoghue expressed concern that there was not time to comply with the rule that Special Meetings had to be announced in public places at least 72 hours in advance, to which the Chair responded that public notices on the usual bulletin boards had been posted more than 24 hours previously.

Actions at this Meeting taken included the formal election of Tom Bohan as Treasurer, and that of Melissa Conrad as Recording Secretary. The Council held a public interview of Melissa beforehand, at which it was mentioned

that, of the fourteen candidates for the seven Council seats, she had come in eighth, that is, that she had nearly won a seat on the Council. She was unanimously elected and then warmly welcomed as the first Secretary of the Council. However, the generous mood of the appointment quickly evaporated when she was asked to read back the wording of two controversial motions that had been put forth, and wasn't able to do so with word-for-word accuracy.

Then followed a discussion of the nature of the Vice-Chair, with Chair Langella saying that it would be considerably more than simply someone to preside when the Chair was absent. With nominations opened, Tom Bohan nominated Bob Hurley for the position. However, Bob declined, partly on the basis of the level of technology that would be demanded. Next, Betsy Stout was nominated and unanimously elected to the position.

The Council expressed a wish to prepare a letter to the Portland City Council requesting that the City Council ensure that available parking for island residents is not adversely affected by the Maine State Pier project. That letter was to be discussed at the Novem-

ber 28th Workshop, with a Special Meeting to be called at the conclusion of the Workshop for the purpose of formally approving the letter to be sent. Tom Bohan and Bob Hurley were appointed as a sub-committee to prepare a first draft of the letter.

In other business, progress was made in developing a committee to study ways the Council should gather information and develop projects necessary to the island. Among other things, the Council will take off the bulletin board that has previously been maintained by the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association, a group that has now yielded its role to the Peaks Island Council. Also, the boards near the gazebo will be used officially for public notification of meetings by the Council.

The proposed group variously described as a Study Commission and Charter Commission was discussed at some length and with a bit of heat. Tom Bohan made the motion to establish a Commission consisting of two Councilors and five members of the public to serve as a short-term group charged with advising the Council on initial priorities and on the commit-

please see COUNCIL, page 11



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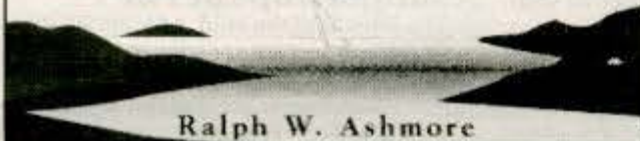
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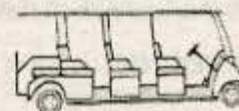
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## COUNCIL, from page 10

tee structure to be established by the Council. There was objection to including "priorities" in this charge, to which Tom argued that it did not seem possible to recommend an initial committee structure without first deciding what the priorities were. Nevertheless, the amendment to strike the phrase about priorities was adopted 6-1, Tom casting the negative vote. The motion as amended then passed unanimously, after which the Chair appointed Tom and Kathryn Moxhay as a committee of two to help the Council assemble the Commission. In addition, posters were to be put up asking persons interested in serving on the Commission to contact Tom or Kathryn by Wednesday, December 5.

This meeting was characterized by procedural errors and uncertainty to such a point that Mike Langella finally said to the audience, "Well, we're learning, folks, and this is what it is."

**November 28, 2007:** The second Workshop commenced at 7 p.m. at the Community Center with a number of the public in attendance. Councilors Bohan and Hurley presented the draft letter to the Portland City Council that they had prepared in response to

the charge given them at the Meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup>. After considerable discussion, the letter was put in final form, with the understanding that it would be voted on at the Special Meeting to follow the Workshop.

The other main topic of the workshop of the Workshop was the selection of a Webmaster to set up and initially operate the Council's Website. Councilor Bohan delivered the report he had previously volunteered to do on the subject of the Website. He recommended that Pat Kelly serve as the first Webmaster and that company already hosting several Island Websites be chosen for that purpose for the Council's Website as well. After some discussion, both recommendations were accepted and Tom along with Councilor Richard were named to work with Pat Kelly in moving the project forward.

The Council then moved into its Special Meeting in order to formally vote on the actions discussed during the Workshop. In particular, the letter to the City Council was adopted unanimously, with the understanding that each individual Councilor would sign it before it was submitted. Administrator Murray said that if the signed letter was in his hands by Friday morning, the 30<sup>th</sup>, he would see

that it got into each Councilor packet in time for the first meeting of the new City Council, to be inaugurated on Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Adjournment was at approximately 8:30 p.m.

**Dec. 5 2007:** At the Workshop tonight, Chair Mike Langella said that he was dismayed to have to report that the Portland City Council, in selecting the contractor for the Maine State Pier (MSP) project at its December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, made no reference to the Peaks Island Council (PIC) letter concerning the (MSP) project. He reported that all of the City Councilors had a copy of the letter and, in addition, Mike had read the letter aloud. The letter had requested that the City Council conduct a traffic impact study before awarding the contract to ensure that the project will not reduce the amount of parking currently available to island residents. Langella was particularly concerned that the island's representative to the City Council, Kevin Donoghue, had made no mention of their unanimous request. The contract was awarded to Olympia Companies.

In a comprehensive presentation, Art Astarita demonstrated the use of the Peaks Island Exchange (PIE) information system, and made it available to

the PIC for use in land management of the island. The PIE data base includes aerial photographs, zoning, street and property maps, topographic data, wetlands, conservation areas, and other geographic and demographic information for use in land management of the island.

In other business, seven names have been received for consideration in creating the Study Commission, which will determine how the PIC will form and operate sub-committees under its jurisdiction. From these seven, Kathryn Moxhay and Tom Bohan, who represent the PIC on the Commission, will recommend five persons of the public to be confirmed by the PIC at the Special Meeting to be held at the close of the Workshop on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

The PIC scheduled the following meetings for January: Workshops on 1/2; 1/9 and 1/16; Regular Session 1/28. The remaining December schedule was also confirmed: Workshop on 12/12; Regular Session 12/17.

Tom Bohan contributed to this report.



# Don't miss this weekend's Peaks Island Music Association Holiday Concert

BY FAITH YORK

Advent. Hanukkah. Kwanzaa. The Festival of St. Lucy. Winter Solstice. The Feast of Iemanjá. This is the Season of Lights. On December 9<sup>th</sup> local icon Nancy 3. Hoffman will once again lead our diverse and amazing community in a celebration of this season. The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Peaks Island Music Association Holiday Concert promises to be a quality program: lively, fun, and faithful to its own custom of being a well-rounded, respectful, and representative salute to differing worldviews.

How very important it is, and how very grand, that such a small village as ours is so wonderfully diverse. Yet, it is able to join together in a single unified observance of – and joyful tribute to – its many divergent traditions.

Throughout this concert's colorful history, we have been granted marvelous opportunities to witness the likes of various religious and secular rituals. These have included an African Thanksgiving rite, a Lith-

uanian Solstice service, a Kwanzaa ceremony, and the breathtaking Santa Lucia procession (to be revisited this year on December 15<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm at Brackett Church).

Together we have been blessed by children's voices and the time-honored practice of storytelling. Together we have participated in Jewish folk dancing and Christian sing-alongs. Together we have shared in each other's heritage. We have laughed together, and we have cried together. Through this one enriching occasion, we freely receive the most invaluable of gifts: opened eyes, opened minds, and opened hearts.

We have the chance to see, to hear, to feel, to touch, to learn – in the midst of recognizing our differences (in personality, and ability, and opinion, and values, and experiences) – how much we are *still* the same. Such an event is not about just including each other, but about embracing each other as full and complete human beings. It's about sharing in a sense of common belonging;

it's about enjoying simply being together. How grateful are we that all flowers and trees and sunsets and people and MUSIC are *not* the same? Oh, the unspeakable beauty that diversity brings us!

This year, the Holiday Concert occurs during Hanukkah. We will be hearing from members of the Casco Bay Tumblers, who will lead us in some traditional Jewish music. As usual, there will be a diversity of acts, including the Maine Squeeze accordion ensemble, who will be offering the world premiere of a new song by Barb Truex and Chris White, "All Too Soon." "Women on Bass" will be featured, with Julie Goell, Ronda Dale Wingfield, and Sally Trice. Margie Mehler will lead us in an interactive version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," and the Uncalled Four will follow-up with "The Twelve Days After Christmas." Patrice Lockhart will play the harp, and the Peaks Island Junior Chorus will sing; so, kids – brush up on your "Jingle Bells" and "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer." The Peaks Island

Chorale will present the lovely "Dona Nobis Pacem" from Bach's splendid Mass in B-minor, accompanied by Susanna Adams on violin, Michele Tranes on oboe, and Nancy 3. Hoffman on piano. In addition to other performers, the 2007 program will end with the audience participating in Handel's famous "Hallelujah Chorus," accompanied by the Peaks Island Orchestra.

As this year comes to a close and we reflect on our world – a world which so much needs enlightenment – may we keep our own minds enlightened, may we reflect on how truly rich are we as a community, and may we remember to celebrate one another.

Please join us on Sunday, Dec. 9 at 2:15 and 7 p.m. at Brackett Memorial Church, on the hill. This year, a portion of the proceeds will be given to Peaks Island Tax Assistance. \$5.00/adults, \$1.00/children. Sponsored by the Peaks Island Music Association.

## Community Notes

### Think green

Think green this holiday and join the Peaks Island Environmental Action Team (PEA.T.) for their meeting Mon., Dec. 10, at 6:30 p.m., at 26 Sterling St. (the old health center). For more information, call 766.5625. Come share your dreams, visions and enthusiasm.

### Renaissance Voices

Christmas with Renaissance Voices, a holiday tradition for many music lovers in Southern Maine, will be presented at Cathedral of St. Luke in Portland, Saturday, December 22, at 8 p.m. The cathedral is at 143 State Street between Congress and Spring Streets. Harold Stover is director of the 21-voice a cappella ensemble.

As Christopher Hyde, writing in the *Portland Press Herald* and *Maine Sunday Telegram*, described the annual Christmas concert, it has "musical interest, variety, beauty and vocal skill, but its primary characteristic is its spirituality. Christmas doesn't get any better than this."

This year's holiday program will feature music from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including works by William Byrd, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Tomás Luis de Victoria, and others, as well as the Maine premiere of *Hail, Christmas Day* by Abbie Burt Betinis.

Admission is \$15 at the door. Discount tickets, at \$12, are available in advance at [www.RenaissanceVoices.org](http://www.RenaissanceVoices.org), and at Starbird Music in Portland and Books, Etc. in both Portland and Falmouth (by cash or check). Admission is free with a valid student ID.

The audience is invited to a reception after the concert and to join Renaissance Voices in celebrating the release of its first CD recording, *In the Ending of the Year*, a collection of pieces from medieval times to the present. Copies of the CD will be available at the concert, on the website, and at several area music and bookstores.

### Sudden Fiction

Portland Adult Education Centers for Lifelong Learning is offering a class in Sudden Fiction On Peaks Island. The local course starts January 17<sup>th</sup>. Instructor Eleanor Morse endeavors in the seven week program to "create a community of writers, who support and encourage each other's writing process, with all its modest successes, private doubts and quiet breakthroughs. With the help of a new writing prompt each week, we write for an hour into our memories and imaginations, and fill the room with everyday mysteries and miracles." Thursdays, 6pm. For more information, call 775.0432.

### Zumba

A fitness program inspired by Latin dance has come to Peaks. Classes are offered on Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. at The Inn on Peaks Island. Says instructor Nina Alves, "Come join the party...first class is free!"

### The Cockeyed Gull

The Cockeyed Gull on Peaks continues its popular Sunday night buffet from 5 to 7pm, elaborated with theme nights this season, including a recent "sold-out" Mexican night. Upcoming featured cuisines include Greek and Korean.

### Tax Assistance

Since Portland will soon be mailing out the next property tax bills, we just wanted to remind you that our clergy, Pastor Beau Boyle, Ministers Shep. Johnson, Desi Larson or Ruth Williamson will be glad to assist you whether this is your first time or you have used us before. The procedure is easy, your anonymity is assured, and we are anxious to help islanders remain in their homes. This is the entire reason for our existence. We hope to have the application in the February Island Times. Thank you to all of our very generous friends who have helped us to give tax assistance to friends and neighbors who are permanent residents of Peaks Island. If you would like to contribute to our 501(c)3, please mail your donation to Peaks Island Tax Assistance, PO Box 126, Peaks Island, Maine 04108.

### Portland's History Docents Class

If you want to get involved, meet interesting people, and learn a lot about the region we live in, you can volunteer with some of the local museums. Island resident Bill Hall is recruiting for the Portland's History Docents program, a ten-week training class for people who would like to become volunteer guides.

As program manager, Hall is putting together the thirteenth annual class of this innovative program. Almost 500 people, including several Peaks Islanders, have completed the training over the years and gone on to work in six of the area's historical attractions.

The Portland's History Docents sessions will be held at the Maine Historical Society every Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, beginning Feb. 14 and concluding April 18. Volunteers for this free training receive lectures on area history, art, and architecture and training on good guiding techniques. Graduates are asked to serve at least six hours per month at a site of their choosing.

Participating institutions are the Portland Observatory, Greater Portland Landmarks walking tours, Portland Harbor Museum, Tate House Museum, Victoria Mansion, and Wadsworth-Longfellow House. Graduation will take place at the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum on May 2.

For more information, you can contact Bill Hall at home at 766-2514 or leave a message for him at Greater Portland Landmarks, 774-5561, extension 120.

### Peaks council meetings

The regular **Peaks Island Council** meeting for December falling on December 24, will be shifted to Dec. 17. Meetings will be at the school, commencing at 6:30 PM. There will be Workshops on the first three Mondays of the month at the Community Center commencing at 7 p.m.

### Improv Troupe

P.I.I.T. (Peaks Island Improv Troupe) will have a show in late January at The Pub at The Inn on Peaks to benefit the Peaks Island Health Center. Look for posters for date and time.

### Library Book Discussion

The Peaks Island Library Book Group meets the first Tuesday of every month from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Community Center. On Jan. 8, the group will discuss Eat, Pray, Love, by Elizabeth Gilbert. The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew and the Heart of the Middle East, by Sandy Tolan, is the selection for Feb. 5. All of the books selected for reading by the book group are available at the Peaks Island Library. Notices of future selections will also be published in "The Star." Everyone is welcome for one meeting or for them all.

### Chess Club

Chess club meets every Monday evening from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the Community Center. Novice to advanced, all are welcome.

### Knitting group

Prayer Shawl Knitting Group meets at Ann Hinderer's house most Thursdays at 1 p.m. This group is affiliated with Brackett Church, but also serves the island community beyond the church family. We knit shawls with blessings, prayers, and intentions for well-being. We receive names from the community and give them to folks who need some comfort. We also are accepting donations of yarn and funds to help purchase yarn. For more information, please contact Rebecca Stephans at 766-3017.

### Winter Carnival

Peaks Island Tax Assistance will be hosting the 3rd annual Winter Carnival during February vacation week, 2008. If you or your organization has a fun idea, a unique activity or a tasty fundraiser, please give Cynthia a call at 766-0067. We'll be glad to help you get the ball rolling. Let's make this the best one yet.

### Saint Lucia Pageant

It's been three years since we had the Swedish traditional Saint Lucia Pageant on Peaks Island featuring Lucia with attendants

and the little "tomtar" / Swedish gnomes - There will be one performance only Dec. 15 at 4:30 pm at the Brackett Memorial Methodist Church. Suggested contribution: Adults \$5.00 - Children Free.

All proceeds to benefit The Peaks Island Children's Workshop. All children from six to 16 who would like to participate in the procession may do so. Parents should contact Gunnel Larsdotter Tel 766-2304 -- no later than Dec. 8. PS. Good spirit is the only prerequisite - Not the ability to sing!

### Camperships at TEIA

The Friends of the TEIA, a Maine 501(c)(3) corporation in existence for several years, was created for the purpose of raising funds to help the summer program for young people at Peaks Island's Trefethen-Evergreen Association. For the past two years, it has been able to provide what it calls "camperships" to all year-round Peaks Islanders under the age of 18. These grants are not need-based, but are considered to be benefits to which all Peaks Island youths are entitled to.

### Homestart

Homestart is celebrating the end of an exciting year. Please join us for food and cookies on Tuesday, December 11th at 7:00 PM at the Senior Center. An open community meeting will be held immediately afterwards to discuss what has been accomplished and what we as a community want to see in the future. Brooke Brewer: [brookbrewer@fastmail.net](mailto:brookbrewer@fastmail.net)

### Libraryelf.com

The Portland Public Library is now a member of a FREE web service that will notify you BEFORE your library materials are due. To register, go to [www.libraryelf.com](http://www.libraryelf.com). This is an especially nice service for families with several cardholders as you can have more than one library card on your account and will receive email notices BEFORE items are due on each card. Signup is quick and easy.

### Taxi volunteers needed

For six years a group of islanders has volunteered to help those needing transportation on Peaks Island. The volunteer drivers include year-round, summer, and partial-year residents. We always can use additional volunteers, especially in the winter months when the need is often the greatest and many of our drivers are not on the island. If you can donate a day of your time, please call Nancy Hall at 2514 or Cevia Rosol at 0059. It's a great way to be part of the community and it can be fun also.

### Gifts for sale

Handmade gifts for the Holidays at The Gem Gallery. December Hours: Fridays 5 to 8 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 12-7 p.m.

### American Legion

Music at the American Legion Outpost 142 on Peaks Island Kenny Grimsley, Angie and friends the first Friday of every month 9pm-1. \$3 donation at the door.